

prices have increased more than \$1 per gallon since the majority party, under Speaker PELOSI, took control of the House last year, increasing from a nationwide average of \$2.33 per gallon on the first day of the 110th Congress to now \$3.34 a gallon. When Speaker PELOSI took office and had a plan to fix the energy cost, oil was selling for \$56 a barrel. Now, it's selling for \$113 a barrel. People are looking for hope and change.

Figures from the Energy Information Administration indicate the U.S. reliance on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, commonly known as OPEC, grew from 50.9 percent of our total crude imports in 2006 to 57.6 percent in 2007. Not only has the majority party failed to end our reliance on Middle Eastern oil for our essential energy needs, they've actually helped grow our dependence to historic and dangerous levels.

We need to make sure that we're not dependent on our energy needs from people that hate us and hate our freedoms all because of their refusal to allow responsible energy production here at home. We cannot tax and regulate our way out of an energy crisis. The American people want an energy policy that's comprehensive and addresses our needs for wind, water, solar, safe nuclear, clean coal technology and, most importantly, the use of American oil.

The American middle class deserves better. They deserve an energy policy that is dependent on American energy, not foreign energy.

CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today is April 15th. It's a momentous day for Americans as all Americans know it's Tax Day. And it's a day that Americans tend to focus a little more attention on the amount of money that they send to Washington. And it's a lot of money. It's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker.

And most folks that I talk to say that would be okay, a lot of them have said that would be okay if they were getting good things for their money, if they were seeing progress happen here in Washington. But that's just not the case.

I, like most of my colleagues, go home every weekend. I went home last weekend, and what I hear from my constituents is what is happening? Where is the leadership in Washington? Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a crisis in leadership in Washington and here in the House of Representatives.

Whether it is supporting our troops, the leadership here apparently is determined that they are going to use our military troops as pack mules to carry

their special projects across the finish line. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

Whether it's protecting our Nation in the area of intelligence, this leadership believes that our intelligence community doesn't need to have the tools necessary to tell what the bad guys are going to do before they do it. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

You have heard a lot about gas prices this morning. Sixteen months ago when this leadership took charge, a barrel of gasoline cost about \$52, \$53 a barrel. Today, it is about \$112, \$113 a barrel. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

What's changed in Washington since that time? New leadership here in the House of Representatives. Mr. Speaker, that's not the kind of change that America voted for.

We need to work together in the area of energy. We need to make certain that we, as Americans, conserve more. We need to make certain that we utilize American resources for Americans. There's incredible resources in our land. We could utilize those resources in environmentally sensitive and technologically sound ways to make certain that we decrease our dependence on foreign oil.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we need to make certain that we accelerate the use of alternative fuel, not picking winners and losers like this leadership in this majority wants to do, pick ethanol and raise the gas prices significantly by that, raise food prices around the world because of the action of this leadership. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership lacking.

Where else is leadership lacking here in the House? Well, Mr. Speaker, it is in helping our friends around the world. We have a former President meeting with Hamas terrorists. Where is the outcry from this leadership saying that that's not the correct thing to do for a former leader of our Nation?

In the area of fair trade, free trade, last week this leadership decided they were going to take one of our friends, Colombia and South America, who have worked with us time and time again, one of the glimmering hopes for democracy in South America, and what does this leadership do? Kick them in the teeth.

It is not just me saying that. Headlines all across the Nation last week: Financial Times, "A setback on trade in Washington;" Knoxville News Sentinel, "House Democrats holding free trade hostage;" Corpus Christi Caller Times, "Congress should pass Colombia trade deal;" Charleston Post Courier, "Politics trump free trade;" Orange County Register, "Trading on ignorance;" the Plain Dealer, "Sidetracking American trade deal hurts U.S. businesses and workers;" the Chicago Tribune, "Caving on Colombia;" Los Angeles Times, "Pelosi plays politics;" The Oklahoman, "Pelosi's ploy: Colombia Deal Succumbs to Politics;" New York Times,

"Time for the Colombian Free Trade Pact;" the Denver Post, "Historical failure on Colombia trade pact;" San Francisco Chronicle, "Trade pandering;" New York Post, "Pelosi's Putrid Sellout;" Seattle Times, "The Washington 6: tampering with trade;" the Boston Herald, "The Pelosi Doctrine: Duck;" Las Vegas Review Journal, "Trade Talks;" National Review, "Free Choice;" St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "The Politics of Trade;" Washington Post, "Drop Dead, Colombia;" and the Wall Street Journal, "Pelosi's Bad Faith."

Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis of leadership here in Washington, here in this House of Representatives. The American people are paying attention. The American people want positive change. The American people want us to work together. I call on the Speaker of this House to bring forward the free trade deal with Colombia, to work together on gas prices, to make certain that we pass a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that allows our intelligence communities to act positively.

Mr. Speaker, I call on our leadership to be responsible.

ETHANOL HAS NOT SAVED US YET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been said by folks that Washington, DC., is the only place in America that is surrounded by reality because people here, especially in Congress, those people say, are in a Disney World atmosphere and don't know how the world really is.

Probably the best example is what has taken place throughout our country in the area of gasoline prices. They are going up every day. Every day we come back to Congress, gasoline prices continue to rise. And there's a constant problem here. Retail operators who run those mom-and-pop independent gasoline stations are saying they're not even making a profit off of gasoline. They hope maybe they can make one cent a gallon. The way they make profit is selling lottery tickets and donuts, and the country continues to see higher and higher gasoline prices.

It's a tremendous problem that we have to deal with. We have to come out of this Disney World atmosphere and solve the problem. Some say what is going to save us all is ethanol. Let's take all of the farmland in America, let's till it up, let's grow some corn, and let's make some of that unproven, unpredictable ethanol to burn in our vehicles.

Of course, what we have done as a Nation by encouraging and subsidizing the special interest group of ethanol, we've raised the corn prices worldwide. In fact, they have tripled in the last 2 years. And because corn prices are going up, wheat prices are going up. And in the last 17 years, food prices in